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General

Congo, known as the Republic of Congo, is located in the W part of Africa. It is bounded on the W by Gabon; on the NW by Cameroon; on the NE by the Central African Republic; on the E and S by Zaire, which is now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo; and on the S by the Angolan province of Cabinda.

The coast, 84 miles long, fronts the South Atlantic Ocean and extends between a position lying 10 miles SE of Pointe Banda (3°49'S., 11°01'E.) and a point lying 19 miles SSE of Pointe Noire.

The terrain is partly mountainous, with a dense forest in the N part.

The climate is equatorial, being constantly hot and humid. There is a long dry season, from May to October, in the SW region. The NE region is more humid, with a heavy annual rainfall.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

It is reported that some obsolescent buoyage (Uniform System of Buoyage) may still be encountered.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the French African Community franc (franc CFA), consisting of 100 centimes.

Government



Flag of Republic of Congo

The Congo, known as the Republic of Congo, gained full independence from France in 1960. After several coups, a Marxist-Leninist state was introduced in 1970. In 1992, multi-party democracy was restored, with a President as chief of

state, a Prime Minister as head of government, and a 153-member Supreme Council of the Republic.

In 1997, that the democratic government was been overthrown by rebels after a 4-month civil war. The legislature consists of an appointed 75-member National Transition Council (NTC). After the new constitution is drafted, elections will be held (were scheduled for 2001), and the NTC will be replaced by a bicameral legislature

The country is administratively divided into nine regions, each headed by a Governor appointed by the President, and one commune.

The legal system is based on French civil law and customary law.

The capital is Brazzaville.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

New Year's Day	January 1
M. Ngoubai Day	March 18
Labor Day	May 1
National Day	August 15
Christmas Day	December 25
Foundation Day	December 31

Industries

The major industries are crude oil, timber, breweries, cigarettes, sugar, food processing, textiles, chemicals, cement, leather goods, soap, livestock raising, and fishing. The main minerals mined are lead, zinc, gold, diamonds, iron ore, and potash. Crops include bananas, cassava, yams, maize, coffee, cocoa, rice, and groundnuts.

Languages

The official language is French. Lingala, Kikongo, and Monokutuba are the most widely used of several African languages.

Regulations

In the event of congestion at the ports, vessels are obligated to work cargo at night and on Sundays. If they refuse to do this, vessels may be relegated to the roadstead anchorages and thereby lose their turn to berth alongside.

As the customs officials are very strict, store lists and crew declarations must be accurate, as the slightest error is penalized and a fine imposed.

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is ALFA (-1). Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

World Time Zone Chart

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

U.S. Embassy

As of 2001, the U.S. Embassy was co-located at the U.S. Embassy in Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire).

The U.S. Embassy in Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire) is situated at 310 Avenue des Aviateurs, Kinshasa-Gombe.

The mailing addresses are, as follows:

1. International mail—
310 Avenue des Aviateurs
B.P. 697
Kinshasa 1
2. Diplomatic pouch—
Unit 31550
APO AE 09828

U. S. Embassy Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire) Home Page

<http://usembassy.state.gov/kinshasa>